



Senior Lawyer Huon Chundy discusses a legal dispute with indigenous people.

BACKGROUND

The human rights picture in Cambodia has improved markedly since the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge in 1979. However, serious human rights issues remain. Despite the existence of labor unions since 1997, labor leaders continue to face threats and intimidation. USAID's current strategy is to improve the capacity of human rights organizations and legal professionals to challenge the political and judicial system for equitable treatment of all citizens. USAID programs also help enforce worker rights, and support impartial dispute resolution mechanisms.

PARTNERS

East West Management Institute (EWMI) – EWMI, in partnership with the American Bar Association, supports human rights and legal reform movements through the Human Rights in Cambodia Project (HRCP). The HRCP project comprises: 1) a large-scale grants program to local human rights and legal aid organizations; 2) the Public Interest Legal Advocacy Project (PILAP), Cambodia's first high-impact legal advocacy organization; 3) a clinical legal education program to build the professional skills of new lawyers and to support the extension of the Bar to rural areas; 4) technical capacity support in case management and legal analysis to local organizations; and 5) education of judiciary and law reform to build efficiency of the justice system.

American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS) - ACILS provides assistance to workers in the garment, tourism and education sectors to form and run democratic and professional unions. ACILS educates workers about their rights under the Labor Code and Constitution. Additionally, ACILS provides legal

aid to workers' unions and technical support in negotiating collective-bargaining agreements with employers.

International Labor Organization (ILO) - ILO supports the Cambodian Labor Arbitration Council, a tripartite arrangement between workers, government and employers whose mandate is to independently and impartially hear labor disputes. The Council also provides training on law and procedures for arbitrators, workers, employers, judges, lawyers and other stakeholders. The Council is viewed as the only corruption-free judicial decision-making body, and has improved labor-employer relations.

Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) - DC-Cam is Cambodia's only independent, non-governmental institution devoted to documenting the Khmer Rouge history. DC-Cam collects evidence, conducts research, and promotes accountability for the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge through public outreach activities. USAID is in the process of establishing an endowment to ensure future sustainability of DC-Cam.

RESULTS TO DATE

- The Human Rights in Cambodia Project (HRCP) has provided nearly \$3 million in sub-grants to local NGOs and PVOs to support promotion and protection of human rights through monitoring, advocacy, and legal aid.
- EWMI/ABA have launched a 10-month clinical education program that is now a requirement for all new lawyers. The program imparts principles of rule of law and practical lawyering skills, and provides services through a walk-in legal aid clinic for the poor.
- The Public Interest Legal Advocacy Project of the Community Legal Education Center (CLEC/PILAP) has introduced new advocacy techniques on behalf of communities facing land dispossession. It has represented more than 40 families threatened with forced eviction on Koh Pich island; 350 families threatened with eviction from their homes in Phnom Penh; and villagers affected by an economic concession in Ratanikiri.
- The ILO's Labor Arbitration Council (LAC) has accepted 184 cases for arbitration; two-thirds of the disputes have been resolved. The LAC publishes its decisions on its website in English and Khmer.
- With assistance from ACILS, 16 collective bargaining agreements were negotiated between unions and industry. Over 4,500 enterprise leaders and 550 union federation leaders have been trained in collective bargaining and union building.
- DC-Cam has catalogued tens of thousands of biographies and historical documents from the Khmer Rouge era; interviewed over 1,700 survivors and 500 cadres; trained law students and NGO workers on international criminal law concepts; and received over 600 visitors to its archives and library.